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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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30 June 1986

Admiral Stansfield Turner
1320 Skipwith Road
McLean, VA 22101

Dear Stan:

The attached "Spotlight" article was brought to my attention.

Whether "Spotlight" quotes you accurately or not, I know you have made generally similar statements in lectures around the country and during your tube appearances. I have attached for your information a copy of HPSCI's public report of its investigation of Woodward's 12 May 1985 article on this car bombing incident and a copy of my letter to the POST on the same subject.

The Agency had no connection, direct or indirect, with the 8 March 1985 car bombing in Beirut; [redacted]

STAT

[redacted]

[redacted] Woodward had my denial of involvement when he ran his piece. It's a bum rap.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

STAT

George V. Lauder
Director, Public Affairs

Enclosures
As Stated

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9 July 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD:

1 July 1986 - Had Radio & TV Reports review all programs for this date (1 June 1986) for a transcript of national TV interview with Stansfield Turner as quoted in 23 June 1986 SPOTLIGHT article. They were unable to come with anything.



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SPOTLIGHT

23 June 1986

Target of CIA Assassination Squad Says U.S. Must Take Responsibility

EXCLUSIVE TO THE SPOTLIGHT

By Warren Hough

Sheik Muhammed H. Fadl Allah, 65, is renowned throughout the Islamic world as a leader with a unique distinction: He has not merely survived an assassination attempt by U.S. agents, but lived to hear a former director of the CIA discuss the crime in public.

On June 1, Adm. Stansfield Turner, who served as director of central intelligence during the Carter administration, conjectured in the course of a national TV interview, that "we" (the CIA) had tried to rub out Fadl Allah with a giant car bomb. "He escaped unhurt," Turner said, "but eight innocent bystanders were killed in the explosion and more than 200 injured."

Almost immediately after a powerful bomb in a small panel truck parked near Fadl Allah's residence in the Beirut suburb of Bir-al-Abid was detonated by remote control on March 4, 1985, diplomatic and intelligence observers pointed to a special CIA covert action unit stationed in Lebanon as the organizer of the attack.

According to the best evidence, made available to The SPOTLIGHT's diplomatic correspondent by UN sources, the terrorist outrage, which devastated several city blocks and left more than 300 casualties, was perpetrated by Lebanese operatives trained and controlled by CIA case officers. The U.S. agents were running a clandestine operation in Lebanon jointly with the Mossad, Israel's secret service (SPOTLIGHT, May 27, 1985).

But despite such long-standing allegations, the TV speculation of former CIA boss Turner hit the vast Islamic world with a force of a second bombshell. Long revered by millions of Shiite Moslems as a spiritual leader, Fadl Allah emerged from the attempted assassination with international stature as a key target of the Reagan administration's costly (\$1.1 billion last year) new covert action program.

But in America almost no one would

recognize the charismatic Shiite elder by name. The reason, a SPOTLIGHT inquiry discovered, is simple: Fadl Allah ranks high on the list of "public enemies," not in the United States but in Israel.

Who is this mysterious Lebanese figure whose presence has driven the Reagan administration to such desperate—and, in the international view, disreputable—attacks? The SPOTLIGHT has obtained and translated a recent interview with Fadl Allah from a leading Arab journalist who occasionally contributes to this newspaper's Middle Eastern coverage.

(Questions are in bold type; answers in light type.)

White House sources say—at least when they are talking privately—that intelligence reports describe you as a man of violence and as a "fanatic" who represents a grave threat to American interests. Are you an enemy of the West?

The West does accuse me of violence—not just the American press but other critics, too. In reality, I am the opposite: a man of religious scholarship and of dialog. My peaceful beliefs are set out in detail in my recent book "Islam and the Theory of Force."

Then why is the American government intent on eliminating you by any means available?

I think the United States began to view me as an enemy during the invasion [of Lebanon by Israel in 1982], when I advocated resistance to the foreign forces.

One intelligence report given to the Americans by Israel, I am told, said that I had blessed the fighters who battled the intruders, including some of the militants who carried out bomb attacks against American targets.

I should like to tell you that all such reports are untrue. I oppose occupation and colonialism. I support the fight against colonialism.

But it is a lie to accuse me of leading people to violence.

I am not hostile to the West. To the contrary, I have assisted in numerous efforts since the invasion to moderate and contain violence likely to victimize

civilians.

The Mossad and the CIA, unfortunately, seem to have no such scruples.

Our enemies accuse us of being anti-Jewish, of wanting to drive all Jewish settlers out of Palestine. That is a lie. Islam has been, throughout history, a religion that knew how to coexist with other faiths. It has ruled the Middle East for 14 centuries, but it has always allowed Christianity, Judaism and other religions to coexist with Islam.

Our present conflict with Zionism is simple: They [political Zionists] stole the land of Palestine and expelled its people. This is why we tell the Israelis to leave Palestine and return the land to its rightful owners. All the Jews who have lived there beforehand—all who have rightful title to their lands—will have the right to stay in Palestine, along with Christians and Moslems who have lived there.

This is not an anti-Jewish issue at all.

Let me illustrate this: Suppose the Zionist intruders in Palestine decided tomorrow to abandon Judaism and convert to Islam, adopt the Moslem faith, *en masse*. Our position would still be exactly the same; stolen lands must be returned to the rightful owners. Any other outcome would be unlawful.

There have been rumors that you are close to the leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran; perhaps even that you are thinking of a similar government for Lebanon.

Neither I nor the leaders of Iran, including Imam [the Ayatollah Ruhollah] Khomeini, are thinking of converting Lebanon into an Islamic republic, at least not in the sense in which the American press reports it. There are deep differences between our two countries [Iran and Lebanon] and our systems, our societies, are disparate.

Continued

As for my contacts with the Iranian leaders, they are long-standing and go back many years, long before the Islamic Republic was installed there. Our relationship is based on friendship and mutual confidence. But that does not mean that we want to align our nations. They are separate, with distinct ethnic and sectarian problems, and will remain so for a long time.

Americans are shocked and intimidated by the upsurge of violence in the Middle East. What can they do to restore peace to this region?

America is involved in this violence, just as we are, and must come to terms with its share of the responsibility for it. Why blame the conflict on "terrorists" and "fanatics"? Islam abhors all such extremism.

[Former Secretary of State Henry] Kissinger initiated the course of events that led to the civil war in Lebanon and since then U.S. policy has led to the Israeli invasion of our country, in which thousands died. Entire nations are scourged and oppressed by the Israeli war machine, with American support.

Americans must realize that oppressed people will make any sacrifice to regain their freedom. Oppressed people cannot always be expected to behave reasonably.

To find peace in the Middle East, Americans first must look to the foreign policy of their own administration. When that policy is changed and aimed at achieving peace, violence will subside in our lands and no American will need to fear visiting us.